

REMARKS

Claims 14-43 remain in the application. Claims 18-20, 27-37, 39, and 41-43 stand allowed. Claims 14-17, 21-22, 24-26, 38 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Arisaka et al. (U.S. Patent 5,930,082). Claims 16, 23 and 26 have been cancelled in the pending amendment.

Initially, it may be instructive to review the claimed invention of the present application in view of the prior art disclosures. In general, the present application discloses and claims in certain embodiments an interconnect module for use in a suspension assembly. More specifically, the application discloses an interconnect module that includes a ceramic insulating substrate and two independent electrical contact regions, the two regions electrically connected by an appropriate number of conducting lines (page 30, lines 20-22).

The interconnect module may be employed to connect a set of integrated suspension leads (electrical leads that are integrated into a layer of suspension) to a slider/head assembly. The first set of contacts on the interconnect module may be used to connect to the integrated suspension leads. The second set of contacts on the interconnect module may be used to connect to the slider/head assembly. Both sets of contacts, or contact regions, are located on the interconnect module and are connected to each other via electrically conducting lines on the surface of or internal to the interconnect module (page 22, lines 1-9).

The slider/head assembly is in disclosed embodiments configured to be oriented for either in-line or orthogonal mounting. In-line mounting is typical for use in a rotary actuator, whereas orthogonal mounting is typical for a linear actuator (Figures 1 and 2).

The interconnect module, as disclosed, allows a single design of an integrated lead suspension to be minimally altered for use in either an in-line (rotary actuator) or orthogonal (linear actuator) application, such as disk drive and disk test systems (page 17, lines 6-19).

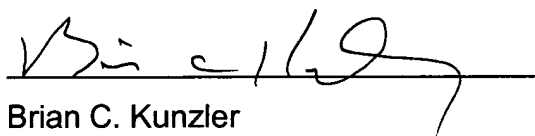
The application also discloses a suspension that includes a load beam and a layered member. The layered member may contain multiple layers, including an electrical lead layer, an electrical insulating layer, and a support layer. The electrical lead and insulating layers may be photolithographically etched to form electrical leads (or lines). These electrical leads, as well as the other layers, extend from the rear termination pad area, or base end portion of the suspension, to the slider/head assembly region (Figure 5; also page 14, lines 20-24; also page 15, lines 6-11).

Additionally, the problem of fabricating MICROACTUATORS is initially described in paragraph 0064, which states in particular that "it is often inconvenient or impossible to route the traces from the suspension for mating with the microactuator" and that "it is desirable or often necessary to interconnect the suspension and the microactuator with an interconnect module."

As a result of the presented remarks and the present amendments to the relevant claims, Applicants assert that all of the independent claims are now in condition for prompt allowance. Applicants have specifically amended the rejected independent claims to include more specific language regarding the MICROACTUATOR in connection with the other features of the relevant claims. Thus, it is believed that all of the pending independent claims and the dependent claims are believe to be allowable.

Should additional information be required regarding the traversal of the rejections of the dependent claims enumerated above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to notify Applicants of such need. If any impediments to the prompt allowance of the claims can be resolved by a telephone conversation, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian C. Kunzler', is written over a horizontal line.

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